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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah"—the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the women-folk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member.[1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

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during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder, where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa community and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age. From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in outward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men, and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects
504 the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular
[609] manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call
[576] them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing
[576] it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope.

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also
578 between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 588–9.

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customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

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178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station, with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 642 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[574] [434] [261] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.

[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

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Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

APPENDIX III

	Price in £E
Average consumption is then:	
One-half ardab of wheat per head	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	1
Total	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs ..	6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

	£E
Clothes	4
Tea and sugar	3
Soap, kerosene, etc. ..	1
	£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a child."[1] "And to Moses, Allah addressed His word, speaking (speaking to him)."[2] So I understood that she had three boys by the names of Ibrahim, Yahya, and Mousa. On asking her how her sons were occupied she replied, "In the name of God . . . and landmarks: and by the stars they find the right way".[3] So I knew that they worked as guides on the desert routes. We went on conversing till sunset, when I offered her food to break her fast, and in gratitude, she said, "In the name of God . . . and whatever good things you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged".[4]

'In the morning we reached Mariam's home, and I met her three sons, who thereupon killed a ram, offering me a grand repast. Mariam herself invited me to eat, reciting, "In the name of God . . . eat and drink pleasantly for what you did".[5] Before I left their place, I asked her sons the reason for their mother's talking thus, always quoting from the Koran. They told me that, one day, while she was reading the Holy Book she came across the text, "He utters not a word, but there is by him a watcher at hand".[6] She immediately took a vow not to utter any statement from that time on which was not in the Koran, for fear of falling into sin.

'The following year, I went to call on Mariam at her house, and on finding her sons there, enquired about their mother. They told me she was on her death-bed. This saddened me, so I received permission to approach her, and drawing near her asked how she felt. She answered, "In the name of God . . . and the stupor of death will come in truth: that is what you shunned".[7] I remained at her side until she died, and then we washed her, wrapped her in her shroud, prayed over her, and buried her. I stayed alone beside her grave, and when night fell, I called out to her, "What has God done to you, Mariam?" I heard a faint voice answering as if from a distance, "In the name of God . . . and reward them, because they were patient, with Garden and silk".

'Reclining therein on raised couches, they shall find therein neither (the severe heat of) the sun nor the intense cold. And close down upon them (shall be) its shadows, and its fruits shall be made near (to them), being easy to reach. And there shall be made to go round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are of glass.

'(Transparent as) glass, made of silver, they have measured them according to a measure.

'And they shall be made to drink therein a cup, the admixture of which shall be ginger.

'(Of) a fountain therein which is named Salsabil.

'And round about them shall go youths never altering in age; when you see them, you will think them to be pearls, scattered, broadcast.

[1] Koran, xix, 12. [2] Koran, iv, 164. [3] Koran, xvi, 16.
[4] Koran, ii, 272. [5] Koran, lii, 19. [6] Koran, l, 18.
[7] Koran, l, 19.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 794 825 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 853 794 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 794 825 845

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-ʿĪd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-ʿĪd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

C F 764 their sympathy to the dead man's family. The space set apart for the women is filled with wailing, but the men await the visitors in solemn silence. Everyone stands up at a new arrival, and greets him with a good wish.

C F 574 764 "The remainder to your life", they say, meaning "Whatever is out off from his life, may God add it to yours, and give you a long life." The answer is "Life is God's". Everyone sits down without more ado. Then, as if he had been searching the depths of his soul for the right words, the newcomer breaks the silence. He quotes sayings, proverbs, or passages from the Holy Books, consoling sentences about the inevitability of death, resignation to the will of God, the holy life of the deceased, the rewards promised to the just, and the courage which men should show in bereavement. One saying calls forth another and one passage is echoed by another of the same kind. Tongues are loosened. The orators show their skill. It is curious to see how much sympathy is shown on the occasion of a death. To comfort the bereaved, folk think nothing of a three hours' walk or the loss of a day's work.

Friends sit up all night with the family, giving the comfort of their presence and their ready help. Death is the great leveller, and provides a centre of attraction. Religious differences disappear and social classes come closer together. Moslems and Christians meet one another in commemoration of the dead ; rich and poor are united around a tomb.

E. Fellert, S.J. (*Minia*)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Another Contrast.

539×
574●
554

104. (The Well-to-do.)

Win gani abu ṭarbūš,
la'ul-lo: ya marḥábe!
we-afriš-lo is-serīr
wa'allī-lo-l-martabe
wazemzem-lo-l-fingal
wa'ul-lo: itfaḍḍal gabe!

If someone with a ṭarbūsh comes to me,
I will say to him: "Welcome!"
And make the bed ready for him,
And make the mattress high,
And offer him the (coffee-) cup, [272]
And say to him: "Please thee, without payment!"

1. The ṭarbūsh is the head-covering of officials and well-to-do citizens (see No. 24). [292]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

105. (The Poor.)

Win gāni abu libde,
la'ul-lo: rūḥ, kide,
ya 'alīl ez-zō', ya ḫēb er-raga!
rūḥ taḥt el-behaim
we-šīl waḥlāt iš-šite!

But if someone with a felt cap comes to me
I will say to him: "Get out of the way; so!
Thou unpolished, miserable fellow!
Go among the cattle
And cart off the winter's dung!"

[291]

1. The felt cap is the head-covering of the poor peasants (see No. 56).
2. So! accompanied by a motion of the hand.
3. Miserable, literally: disappointed in his hopes.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]
[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

512 264 262 After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablieh*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanieh*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

[415] [252] [194]

512 After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

[514]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the latter being less in use among the women than among the men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry—in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*esmk Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

595 [831] is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If [594] [264] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves, it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and 596 888 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being [842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional 165 *supporters*. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule, [587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[202] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
● [574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a
[735] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street. Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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796 Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of [788] reverential bendings (*rák'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; [943] numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can [265] now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee [262] or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the 538 by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by [534] scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws [533] from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with 796 more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "pre- 594 pares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours
796 after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
785 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
[202] sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[533] also of feasting, for which the women during the following month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is cele-
[262] brated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their cus-
[202] tomers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[785] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast, the first for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green, and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes, their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty, equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a happy new year, though the new year will not come for three months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving another in any capacity on this day receives from his master a money present or at least a new garment. The women also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, however, as the second day of the feast some persons who are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell;

[i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analysis]

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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent